COUNTY OF
SAN BERNARDINO

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The Senate and Assembly are both in session. Below you will find a list of state legislative activates that the County and state advocates are monitoring the week of August 13, 2012, as well as a brief recap of legislative items of interest from last week.

Status of County Advocacy Legislation

County Supported AB 890 (Olsen), which was amended on August 7, 2012, would exempt certain public works projects from the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), such as repair, maintenance, and minor alterations of existing roadways; provided that the project is initiated by a city or county to improve public safety, does not cross a waterway, and involves negligible or no expansion of an existing use. This bill passed the Senate Environmental and Quality committee on a 6-1 vote and is scheduled to be heard in the Senate Appropriation committee.

County Supported AB 1181 (Butler), which was amended on May 31, 2012, would reauthorize the State-County Property Tax Administration Loan Program, which was established by the Legislature to ensure counties had sufficient resources to assess the value of newly constructed properties or those which had changed ownership. A hearing date is pending.

County Supported AB 1712 (Beal), which would provide additional clean-up to the California Fostering Connections Act of 2010 and clear the way for full implementation. Additionally, this legislation would change Transitional Housing Placement Plus (THP-Plus) Foster Care from a county approved program to a statewide licensed community care facility thus streamlining the process in the most cost efficient manner for the implementation of these facilities. This legislation passed the Senate Judiciary committee on a 4-0 vote and is scheduled to be heard in the Senate Appropriation committee.

County Supported AB 1600 (Torres), which was amended on May 30, 2012, would authorize the Metro Gold Line Foothill Extension Construction Authority (Authority) to facilitate the expansion of light-rail service to the City of Montclair. This bill passed the Senate floor on a 34-0 vote and will now be enrolled to the Governor.

County Supported AB 1623 (Yamada), which was amended on August 6, 2012, would extend the authority of a county board of supervisors to charge fees to recover the costs of the County Sealer, from January 1, 2013 to January 1, 2018 and provide adjustments to the fee for particular weighing and measuring devices to reflect the actual cost of providing services. This bill passed the Senate floor on a 27-9 vote and will head to the Assembly for concurrence.

County Supported SB 1186 (Steinberg), which was amended on June 20, 2012, would prohibit an attorney or other person from issuing a demand for money to a building owner or tenant, or an agent or employee of a building owner or tenant, or from receiving any payment, settlement, compensation, or other remuneration pursuant to a demand for money that is provided or issued without or prior to the filing of a complaint on the basis of one or more construction-related accessibility violations. This bill passed the Assembly Appropriation committee on a 17-0 vote and is scheduled to be heard on the Assembly floor.

The mission of the government of the County of San Bernardino is to satisfy its customers by providing service that promotes the health, safety, well being, and quality of life of its residents according to the County Charter, general laws, and the will of the people it serves.

County Opposed SB 1222 (Leno), which was amended on June 19, 2012, would impose hard caps on solar permit fees, create unnecessary and burdensome administrative process and erode city and county decision making authority. This bill passed Assembly Local Government on a 7-1 vote and is schedule to be heard in Assembly Appropriations.

County Sponsored SB 1425 (McLeod), which was amended on June 26, 2012, would improve the ability of county child welfare services to protect seriously abused children. This bill passed the Assembly floor on a 77-0 and will now be enrolled to the Governor.

County Supported SB 1544 (Hernandez), which was amended on May 2, 2012, would afford disaster loss treatment to taxpayers in the County of San Bernardino and Los Angeles affected by the serve winds in 2011. This bill passed the Assembly Appropriations committee on a 17-0 vote and is scheduled to be heard on the Assembly floor.

Legislative Analyst's Office Releases Report on Local Government Bankruptcy

With three California municipalities recently filing for Chapter 9 relief and other cities reportable being on the verge, the Legislative Analyst's Office (LAO) released a report last week entitled, "Local Government Bankruptcy in California." The report addresses some of the questions concerning local agencies and the bankruptcy process such as 1) which local governments are allowed to file bankruptcy protection and under what circumstances; 2) what are the major steps of the bankruptcy process; and 3) what types of obligations can be changed or eliminated through bankruptcy. The report can be found here.

Committee Holds Hearing on Ballot Initiatives

The Senate Committee on Governance and Finance held an informational hearing last week on the various tax initiatives that are scheduled for the November 2012 election, including Governor Brown's initiative. The hearing, scheduled to be televised on the public access channel, was pulled from being aired by Senator Steinberg's office. The Senate President pro Tem's decision incited a rebuke from the committee's chair. In a statement issued on Friday, Senator Wolk indicated that the decision not to broadcast the hearing was made by Senator Steinberg's office without her knowledge or consent. When pressed about the issue, a spokesmen for for Steinberg stated the office opted to stop the video feed out of fear that it might become political fodder for both supporters and critics of the ballot initiatives.

The agenda for the hearing can be found here and the background information can be found here.